

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 8438

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: MR CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW FOR PERIOD MAY

6-

MAY 12, 1973

THE FOLLOWING SENT SAIGON FROM AMCONSUL DANANG 12 MAY 73 REPEATED
TO YOU FOR YOUR ACTION AND INFO QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 520

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJ: MR I CEASEFIRE AND POLITICAL WEEKLY OVERVIEW FOR

PERIOD MAY 6 - MAY 12, 1973

SUMMARY: MILITARY ACTIVITY AGAIN DROPPED TO ANOTHER NEW LOW
IN MR I WITH COMMUNIST VIOLATIONS AVERAGING LESS THAN 15 A
DAY. GENERAL TRUONG IS BEGINNING EFFORTS TO IMPROVE FRIENDLY
DISPOSITIONS IN THE SENSITIVE CO BI - AN LO AREA NORTHWEST OF
HUE. THE PRISONER RELEASE IN QUANG TRI WAS FINALLY COMPLETED
BUT OTHER PLANNED RELEASES IN SOUTHERN MR I DID NOT TAKE PLACE.
ICCS ACTIVITY WAS STEPPED UP IN BOTH CEASEFIRE REGIONS I AND
II, INCLUDING THE INTERROGATION IN DANANG OF AN NVA POW. THE
POSSIBILITY OF PRG DEPLOYMENT TO CEASEFIRE REGION I WAS REPORTED
IN HUE. THE COST OF LIVING HAS DECREASED SLIGHTLY IN DANANG
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INCLUDING A DROP IN THE PRICE OF RICE. THE BUDDHISTS WITH SOME GVN COOPERATION ARE PREPARING FOR BUDDHA'S BIRTHDAY. END SUMMARY.

1. MILITARY SITUATION:

MILITARY ACTIVITY IN MR I DROPPED AGAIN TO A NEW LOW SINCE THE CEASEFIRE. I CORPS REPORTED COMMUNKST VIOLATIONS AVERAGED LESS THAN 15 PER DAY, MOSTLY ATTACKS BY FIRE. THE CASUALTY RATE DROPPED ACCORDINGLY WITH FRIENDLY KIA AVERAGING 4 A DAY. FRIENDLY ARTILLERY FIRED LESS THAN 2,000 ROUNDS A DAY AND FIVE OF THE SEVEN DAYS SAW LESS ARTILLERY FIRED NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS THAN SOUTH. WHAT ACTIVITY THERE WAS CONTINUED HEAVIEST IN THE FIRST DIVISION AO NORTHWEST AND WEST OF HUE.

CG MR I GENERAL TRUONG, WHO HAD SPENT FOUR DAYS AT I CORPS FORWARD IN HUE, COMMENTED TO THE CONSUL THAT THE PRESSURE IN THE SENSITIVE CO BI - AN LO AREA, NORTHWEST OF HUE, HAS LESSENED AND THE FRIENDLY SITUATION IMPROVED RECENTLY. HOWEVER, HE INTENDS TO ADD STRINGENCY AND IMPROVE COMMAND AND CONTROL IN THE AREA BY EXTENDING THE MARINE DIVISION TO THE WEST IN QUANG TRI AND MOVING THE AIRBORNE DIVISION AROUND TOWARD THE SOUTH. WHILE MILITARY ACTIVITY DIMINISHED, ENEMY EFFORTS AT IMPROVING THEIR ROAD NET AND INCREASING THEIR SUPPLIES CONTINUED AT A HIGH LEVEL. KHE SANH AIRFIELD CONTINUES TO BE IMPROVED AND STORAGE AREA DEVELOPMENT AND ROAD BUILDING ARE REPORTED DAILY BY ARVN AS OCCURRING THROUGHOUT THE WESTERN AREA OF MR I.

2. PRISONER RELEASES:

THE LARGE PRISONER RELEASE IN QUANG TRI WAS FINALLY COMPLETED ON MAY 11, TWO DAYS LATE. THE REASON FOR THE DELAY WAS THE INABILITY OF GVN AND PRG TO AGREE ON PROCEDURES FOR PROCESSING RELEASEES WHO CHOSE TO "RALLY" TO THE GVN RATHER THAN BE TURNED OVER TO THE PRG. THE IMPASSE WAS BROKEN ON THE MORNING OF THE LAST

DAY (MAY 11) WHEN PRG AND GVN OFFICIALS FROM SAIGON ARRIVED TO NEGOTIATE A SOLUTION. CANADIANS AND GVN OFFICIALS REPORTED THAT THE PRG USED PRESSURE TACTICS SUCCESSFULLY DURING THE WAITING PERIOD ON THE LAST DAY TO CAUSE SOME OF THE RALLIERS TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS AND GO OVER TO THE PRG.

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INTENDED RELEASES BY THE PRG IN QUANG NAM, QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI HAVE ALSO RUN INTO PROBLEMS. THE QUANG NGAI RELEASE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR MAY 2 AND POSTPONED TO MAY 11 FAILED TO COME ABOUT AND WAS POSTPONED INDEFINITELY AGAIN DUE TO FAILURE BY THE PRG IN SAIGON TO PROVIDE ASSURANCES OF SAFETY

FOR THE ICCS OBSERVERS. ACCORDING TO REGION EE CANDEL, THE PRG HAVE ASSERTED IN SAIGON THAT THEY MAY RELEASE THE PROSONERS " WITH OR WITHOUT THE ICCS."

3. ICCS:

ICCS ACTIVITY INCREASED IN BOTH CEASEFIRE REGIONS I AND II. IN CEASEFIRE REGION I, A NUMBER OF INVESTIGATIONS HAVE BEEN COMPLETED OR IN PROGRESS. IN PARTICULAR, THE INVESTIGATION OF THE

APRIL 7 SHOOT- DOWN OF ICCS HELICOPTER 006 IN QUANG TRI HAS BEEN COMPLETED, WITH FOUR SEPARATE NATIONAL VIEWS. IN REGION II, CANADIANS AND INDONESIANS HAVE INTERROGATED AN NVA POW " A LA REGION VII" IN SPITE OF HUNGARIAN AND POLISH OBJECTIONS AND FILED A REPORT FINDING THAT THE POW DID INFILTRATE SUBSEQUENT TO THE CEASEFIRE AND PARTICIPATE IN AN ATTACK IN VIOLATION OF THE CEASEFIRE. THE PLENARY MEETING AT WHICH THE INTERROGATION REQUEST WAS DISCUSSED WAS THE INTRODUCTORY MEETING FOR THE NEW POLDEL CHIEF, COLONEL MARIAN WIECZERZAK, WHO HAILS FROM REGION VII AND MAY PROVIDE A LITTLE MORE COMPETITION FOR THE CANDEL HERE BASED ON HIS ON- THE- JOB TRAINING FROM REGION VII CANDEL, EXSTAFFER MANFRED VON NOSTITZ.

4. PRG DEPLOYMENT:

THE POSSIBILITY OF PRG DEPLOYMENT TO REGION I WAS REPORTED BY GVN REGION I JMC REPRESENTATIVE TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK.

6. ECONOMIC:

DANDNAG IN PARTICULAR, SHOWED SOME FAVORABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE PAST WEEK. THE CONGEN DANDNG RETAIL PRICE INDES FOR APRIL SHOW A 2 TO 2.5 PERCENT DOWNTURN. THIS DOWNTURN REFLECTS A VERY MODEST 0.3 PERCENT INCREASE IN FOOD FOR THE MONTH (AS COMPARED TO 3 PERCENT INCREASES FOR THE MONTHS OF JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH) AND A NON- FOOD PRICE DROP OF 1 PERCENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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ALSO, THE PRICE OF 25 PERCENT BROKEN DELTA RICE, WHICH IS THE MOST POPULAR VARIETY, DROPPED FOR PIASTERS A KILOGRAM AND PRICE IN ATTRIBUTED TO THE SALE OR BARTER OF SURPLUS RICE BY REFUGEES AS WELL AS A BUMPER CROP WITHIN THE REGION.

6. BUDDHA' S BIRTHDAY PREPARATIONS:

DURING THE PAST WEEK AN QUANG BUDDHISTS HAVE BEEPRE- OCCUPIED WITH PREPARATIONS FOR THE CELEBRATIONS OF BUDDHA' S BIRTHS. IN DANANG, THE LOCAL HIERARCHY HAS RECEIVED THE COOPERATION OF THE LOCAL GVN AUTHORITIES AND WILL HOLD CEREMONIES AT THE MUNICIPAL PARK. IN HUE THE BUDDHISTS WILL APPARENTLY USE THE TU

DAM PAGODA THE THE FOCAL POINT FOR THEIR CELEBRATIONS. THOMPSEN
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